

Straight Facts About Alcohol Abuse



Alcohol use is common in our society, and a social drink on occasion is little cause for concern. But for some people, the use of alcohol becomes a problem that interferes with their personal, professional, family or school life.

Warning Signs

It's not always easy to tell if someone you know or care about is suffering from alcohol abuse. In fact, most heavy drinkers do everything possible to deny or hide the problem. However, there are certain warning signs that may indicate someone has a problem with drinking.

- Getting drunk on a regular basis.
- Lying, especially about the amount of alcohol they consume.
- Stating that they need to drink in order to have fun or to feel better.
- Pressuring others to have a drink with them.
- Spending less time on activities they used to do such as sports or hobbies, or hanging out less with friends who don't drink.
- Missing work or poor work performance.
- Being careless about personal appearance.
- Having blackouts — sometimes not remembering what happened while or after drinking.
- Legal trouble such as driving under the influence of alcohol.
- Sudden changes in mood or personality.

Seeking Help

Alcohol abuse is not a sign of weakness or poor character, it is a disease that can be treated. If you know someone who may have a drinking problem, professional help is available through local health departments, community treatment services, hospitals, support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and alcohol hotlines. However, alcohol abusers usually don't realize they have a problem, so it's up to family and friends to help them help themselves.

And you can get help even if the drinker won't. Professional counselors and support groups for friends and families of alcohol abusers can show you how to approach the person and encourage him or her to seek help.

Keep in mind that many people may go through treatment a number of times before they can fully recover. Don't give up hope.

UBH can provide further advice on how to approach a friend or loved one about seeking help. Our counselors are available anytime, every day. Simply call the toll-free number on your benefits card, or visit www.liveandworkwell.com.

Resources

If you or someone you know needs help or more information, contact:

Alcoholics Anonymous

<http://www.aa.org>

Locations of local AA groups and informational materials on the AA program. Many cities and towns also have a local AA office listed in the telephone book.

Al-Anon and Alateen

1-888-4AL-ANON (425-2666)

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

Referrals to local support groups for friends, spouses and children of alcoholics.

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)

1-800-622-2255

<http://www.ncadd.org>

Educational materials on alcoholism, and contact information of local NCADD affiliates (who can provide information on local treatment resources).

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

1-301-443-3860

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

Free publications on all aspects of alcohol abuse and alcoholism.